

HELPING US HELP CORPORATE AMERICA

A request for a \$2,000 grant in support of

ASPIRA's core programs:

"Dropout Prevention/Leadership Development"

submitted by

ASPIRA, INC. OF NEW JERSEY

to

THE NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK OF NEW JERSEY

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Introduction

ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey is a private, non-profit, community-based organization founded in the late sixties to serve the needs of the Puerto Rican and larger minority youth of New Jersey. The National Westminster Bank of New Jersey is well-acquainted with our work and has supported our efforts since 1979.

Although based in New Jersey, ASPIRA is attuned to what is happening in its broad context, the United States. Each calendar year, we prepare a summary of United States development trends relevant to our work. We compile and analyze information published both in professional and popular literature. This information is then applied to a thorough examination of the work ASPIRA conducts. Such is the basis for the preparation of our new and continuation support proposals to foundations and corporations that are or seem to be interested in assisting us in our work.

This tireless analysis process is essential. There are many causes in this country worthy of support. In times of economic recession, such as those we are living, corporate social responsibility demands that grants should be awarded to entities that can assure a multiplier effect for every dollar received. ASPIRA does exactly that. The following essay will explain how, as gleaned from the experience of 1991.

ESSAY

"Helping to improve Hispanic educational outcomes is something corporations must do not out of nobility but out of enlightened self interest." Denise De la Rosa and Carlyle E. Maw, Hispanic Education. A statistical Portrait, Washington, D.C., National Council of La Raza, October 1990, p. vi.

The Dumbing Down of America?

During 1991 many newspaper and professional journal articles expressed a growing concern for what Albert Shanker called "Dumbing Down America." (Please refer to the bibliography at the end of this essay, page 9.) The perception of a crisis in the United States educational system is not new, of course. What is new is that leading businesses in corporate America are realizing that not only are schools providing students the "wrong" type of skills for successful employment, but that corporations themselves are not requiring from workers the skills that seem to be necessary for increased, competitive production costs. The United States has been described as increasingly adopting "Third World standards" to solve the nation's productivity problems:

Even if schools produce the most

won't do us any good unless our business leaders have a vision of what our country should be and unless they realize that adopting Third World standards to solve our productivity problems will lead to a Third World economy. (Shanker:76)

The gist of the argument is that schools and corporations respond to an organizational model devised late in the 19th century and early in the 20th. The model, which allowed the United States to become the most powerful and productive nation in the world, has slowly but surely become obsolete. As a result, businesses and educational institutions have ceased to be "high performance organizations" and

America has stagnated...Over the last 17 years, the United States has been in last place among all industrial nations in terms of improvement in productivity. (...) The results of declining productivity and quality are lost market shares, a high trade deficit, falling profits, lower family incomes, greater social inequality, and a steady, general economic decline. (O'Toole and Simmons: 71)

Some of the elements that have rendered the predominant United States organizational model obsolete are the advent of the computer, high-speed communications and universal education. These factors are said to be heralding a third industrial revolution; one for which the US is caught unprepared. Thus, the argument goes, it is not only that our educational institutions are "dumbing down" our students, but also that corporate-business institutions are also "dumbing down" their requirements for worker's skills.

The Relevance of ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey

In our 1991 essay, we stated that the relevance of ASPIRA's vision over the 1960's was only acknowledged during the 1980's. Our founders saw very early that what have always constituted ASPIRA's core programs, leadership development and dropout prevention for Puerto Rican and other minority youth, were a major means of providing the United States with access to the talents, intelligence and skills of its minority populations. As stated by Mendel and Lincoln (p.11):

In 1967, 41.1 percent of all jobs in America were held by high school dropouts, while college graduates held just 13.2 percent of all jobs. In 1987, dropouts held only 14.9 percent of the jobs; college

graduates held 25.3 percent. Between now and the year 2000, the average new job will require two years of post-secondary education. Gone are the good old days."

The importance of our work in the State of New Jersey has been emphasized by the results of the 1990 Census. The Census revealed that New Jersey is the only state with more than 1,000 people per square mile in the United States. (New Jersey was revealed to have 1,035 people per square mile; India has 677 people per square mile.) The Hispanic population of the State, which is ASPIRA's main constituency, grew by 66.4% over the past decade, according to the New York Times News service, as reported by The San Juan Star (5/7/91, p. B-6.), and by 50.4%, as reported by the Midwest/Northeast Voter Registration Project (MNVRP). This source states that its numbers may reflect an undercount. There is no doubt, however, that there has been an enormous expansion of the Hispanic population in New Jersey over the past decade.

Our population is concentrated in the urban centers and comprises almost 10% of the total population of the state. It is a young population which has not yet been able to overcome the vicious circle of urban poverty, in which education, that great source of advancement and upward mobility, is simply not enough as presently provided by the public schools.

Our kids are poor. They are too often overcome by the obstacles posed by an educational system that the state's Supreme Court declared in violation of the constitutional mandate to provide an adequate education to students who reside in its poorest school districts. As we declare again and again in our presentations to the public and private sectors, the statistics which describe the condition of Hispanics in the United States clearly demonstrate that "those who need more are receiving less."

Demographic trends and the 1990 census have made it clear that minorities and, within, Hispanics, are the youngest and fastest growing population sectors in the United States. Barton & Kirsch have pointed out that the United States (p.25):

From the labor supply standpoint, face(s) a future where minority populations with traditionally lower educational attainments and traditionally lower literacy levels will be a growing proportion of new labor force entrants. Thus, society will have to run faster to stay in the same place."

Dropout rates among our kids have always been alarmingly high but in previous decades, at least, our high school dropouts and graduates could find jobs that would keep them out of welfare. This is no longer the case. Ponesha has expressed it very clearly, particularly referring to New Jersey (p.1):

Young people today who do not graduate from high school face a future in which underemployment and low wages are a near certainty.

The reality in New Jersey, according to a new brochure by the Association for Children in New Jersey, is that "a parent working full time at minimum wage levels earns less than \$7,000 per year. This amounts to \$583 monthly. The federal poverty level for a family of 3 is \$838 monthly. The standard of need for Aid to Families With Dependent Children and the minimum wage level do not reflect the actual cost of living in the state of New Jersey." In other words New Jersey adults that are high school dropouts and even those that did graduate from high school, as soon as they become family heads and even when they find an employment, will need to rely on public assistance in order to survive.

In it's core programs, i.e. Leadership Development and Dropout Prevention, ASPIRA built-in many elements that, we are happy to see, have finally been acknowledged by the most advanced sectors of corporate America as essential for a highly productive work force. Early on, ASPIRA saw that Puerto Rican and other minority youth needed to develop a certain set of non-academic skills in order to become productive members of the United States society. It has taken three decades for the United States mainstream to agree. Let us briefly summarize what the 1991 literature has stated on the subject.

The Essence of High Performance and Productivity

Many publications have pointed out that there are certain values essential for high corporate performance and productivity: honesty, trust, participation, cooperation and respect for individual differences. O'Toole and Simmons conclude (p.70):

Successful implementation of these values leads to improved communications, more innovation, better working conditions and higher quality, productivity and morale. Every American company that has had sustained high performance against world competition manifests a similar set of values.

Strict hierarchical, top-down, authoritarian organizations that demand low skills and blind obedience are found to be wanting in high performance and productivity. Team-work, worker participation in decision-making, processes to allow the input of workers' creativity, so they are enabled to think and to plan instead of pushing buttons or tightening bolts seem to be the new desiderata.

The United States' Secretary of Labor, concerned by the situation we have described, created a Commission integrated by representatives of the nation's schools, business, unions and

government. The Commission examined current changes in the world of work and the implications of those changes for the nation's schools and business. It particularly focused on how schools prepare young people for work, and its Report, released June 28, 1991, is widely known as SCANS.

SCANS (p. 5) identified five competencies and three categories of skills and personal qualities that workers need "for solid job performance" in the present and foreseeable future of the United States. Most of what SCANS listed as essential is directly built into ASPIRA's core programs:

A. Competencies.

1. Productive use of time, money, materials, etc.

ASPIRA Clubs, established in each school where we work, are formally organized and run by students under the guidance of an ASPIRA counselor. Students elect their club officers, prepare written agendas for each meeting, keep minutes, conduct fund-raising activities, organize conferences and workshops, etc.

2. Interpersonal skills.

Our students are engaged in most of those mentioned by SCANS: working on teams (clubs are teams), teaching others (peer teaching, in our case), serving customers (in bake sales and similar activities), leading (through leadership retreats), negotiating (in team-building retreats), and working well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds (self-explanatory).

3. Productive use of information (particularly, using computers).

All ASPIRA centers are computerized, both for administrative and academic activities. ASPIRA students are trained free-of-cost in the use of our equipment and programs.

4. Productive use of systems.

As a non-profit agency, ASPIRA can not afford waste. All ASPIRA students learn this lesson early, as applied to matters as diverse as the system of ASPIRA Clubs, ASPIRA conferences, and ASPIRA computer systems.

5. Productive use of technology.

Same as 3 and 4, above.

B. Skills required by competencies

1. Basic skills - reading, writing, math, speaking and listening.

Because schools do not offer enough, ASPIRA provides

tutoring, mentoring and computer-assisted instruction both in group and individualized, to students that lag behind in their studies.

2. Thinking skills -creative thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, reasoning.

The scarce funds available to our Clubs, and the many requirements that ASPIRA makes of them, make it imperative for our students to use creativity-promoting activities, such as brainstorming, and to reason carefully to solve their problems and to make tough decisions. The needs of our kids are so pressing that creativity and problem-solving are, for them, survival tools and, thus, ASPIRA makes sure that students develop them.

3. Personal qualities-responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management and integrity.

ASPIRA operates through strict ethics of community service and dedication. All our students take a solemn oath to abide by these ethics in an annual ceremony in which new students are introduced to them and old students (as well as guests, staffs and volunteers) renew their commitment to personal and societal improvement.

ASPIRA counselors are in close regular contact with all students and, in a way, ASPIRA becomes their second home. Personal qualities and weaknesses soon become evident, and personal counseling is provided free-of cost to all that need it by our specially trained Counselors.

Is ASPIRA perfect?

Of course not! Our lengthy detail on how we provide what SCANS has identified as essential is only meant to underline the fact that ASPIRA had a vision in the 1960's that, even during the last decade of the Twentieth century, has not only proven itself to be relevant but that has become a need for the broad institutional spectrum of the United States. This is so, not because our founders were geniuses -although we believe some, like Dr. Antonia Pantoja, are- but due to the fact that our community has always been desperately poor and, as it is often said, "necessity is the mother of invention."

We are gratified to see that, each day, our core programs become more relevant. But we also know that, for each student that ASPIRA touches, there are many that we can not reach. There is so much we can do with our scarce resources. We are saddened, always anxious, often angry, but seldom dismayed. We do make a difference. We do learn from our mistakes. We are aware that ASPIRA is the proverbial grain of sand in the huge expanse of our State and Nation's reality. But we are persuaded that said reality is less painful for our people because we are around.

Moreover, the reality of the United State's corporate and professional world has greatly benefited from our hard work. We

have provided workers at all levels that are productive, committed, creative and ethical. The schools and universities alone would not have been able to make it. They are too heavily burdened just by trying to meet their academic, traditional missions, goals and objectives.

Barton and Kirsch have summarized it better than we could do it (p.20):

When the skill needs of the work place are discussed in the media, the attention is usually wholly focused on formal education or on literacy. These are very important considerations, not to be taken lightly or downplayed. But they are just one component of the ability required to function in the modern work place. (...) What we argue, then, is that in addition to giving attention to prose, document and quantitative literacy, this expanded list of skills and characteristics must be addressed. These skills have not become part of any large-scale assessments of students and young adults, so nothing is yet known about the extent to which new workers are aware of their relative importance, let alone possess them. Also, little exists in the way of knowledge regarding whether and to what extent schools emphasize these abilities...Still, we do know that employers frequently find these skills missing in young people applying for jobs.

With a profound sense of humbleness, but without false modesty, we at ASPIRA have to tell you, the reader: we knew. Back in the sixties, when our communities in the United States collectively realized their dire poverty and the need to lift ourselves by our own bootstraps, we knew that schools alone would never be enough for our kids. And we called our core programs for youth "Dropout Prevention and Leadership Development." These are the programs for which we request support from the National Westminster Bank of New Jersey.

Appendix A provides a detailed description of how these programs operate. Subsequent Appendices provide the supplementary documentation required by the National Westminster Bank of New Jersey.

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Appendices

ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey's Core Programs

"Aspira" is a Spanish word. In our organization it is directed at Latino youth and tells them: "You must aspire." Specifically, ASPIRA's mission is to encourage and assist Puerto Rican and other minority youth to strive towards the highest possible levels of:

1. formal education,
2. effective leadership, and
3. commitment to their community.

Since 1968 ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey, a community based, private non-profit organization, has been engaged in discovering alternatives that will increase the school retention of Puerto Rican/Latino students for the above-stated purposes. After two decades of effort, ASPIRA is proud of what it calls the "ASPIRA Core Programs", a tried and tested approach that, as of 1990, has helped thousands of minority students to stay in school, to graduate from high school and to initiate post secondary and college studies.

AN OVERVIEW OF ASPIRA'S CORE PROGRAMS

To attain its objectives of Dropout Prevention and Leadership Development among Puerto Rican and other minority youth, ASPIRA hires Counselors, trains them, and places them in schools which have high concentration of Latino students. Counselors then proceed to identify, recruit and assist students in setting goals for themselves and in striving to attain these goals.

Much of this work is accomplished through the formation and development of ASPIRA Clubs, which are democratically organized and operated by students with the assistance of our Counselors. Early in the school year a Leadership Retreat is provided for the clubs' elected officers. The clubs meet regularly (the average is twice a month) during the school year, utilizing parliamentary procedures, and preparing their own agendas, supervised by the Counselors. Club members are called "Aspirantes" (which means "those who aspire.")

Aspirantes participate in a variety of career and post-secondary education orientation activities (workshops, seminars, field- trips, etc). Cultural/ethnic awareness and identity events are an important component in the annual program of activities sponsored by ASPIRA. Moreover, students organize dances and other "for fun" activities, conducting their own fundraising to finance them. In May, a Statewide Youth Conference is convened for club delegates to discuss topics they deem relevant. At the end of the school year, an Awards Night Ceremony is held to recognize special merit.

During the summer, some students become Interns in diverse career-oriented programs, and Counselors become engaged in staff development and program documentation activities. In the late

summer, ASPIRA and its students proudly participate in a major public cultural awareness event, the Puerto Rican Day Parade. When the school year starts again in September, the staff is ready to continue its work with the carry-over student caseload, and to recruit new participants into the active caseload.

ASPIRA counselors not only facilitate club activities, but also provide a variety of bilingual (English-Spanish) services, including personal, career and academic orientation and counseling, as needed. In the process, Counselors become natural role models for Puerto Rican/Latino students. Most Counselors are young Latino college graduates (a Bachelor's degree is the minimum acceptable credential.) What Counselors may lack, ASPIRA provides in-service, by means of staff development activities and close supervision, provided by a team of Coordinators and Program Directors.

Staff empathy, familiarity with the students' culture and language, and a commitment to students' success are among the qualitative aspects of the ASPIRA Process which make a difference. This was confirmed in 1981 when, with the assistance of the William T. Grant Foundation, ASPIRA undertook an effort to have SOMOS, Inc., an external evaluation firm, conduct an assessment of ASPIRA operations since its inception. Thousands of alumni records were analyzed, and these data were complemented by a mail survey and home visits to former Aspirantes for personal interviews. The Evaluation Report (ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey. A Decade's Retrospective Evaluation Study. Newark, New Jersey, August 1982.) provides evidence that ASPIRA has always been ahead of its time in providing for the unmet needs of Latino students in the public schools of New Jersey.

Findings indicated that 80% of Aspirantes felt ASPIRA had made a significant difference in forming their career goals, strengthening their ethnic and cultural identity, and improving their self-image; two-thirds stated that their classroom experience improved after joining ASPIRA; more than half of the college-bound students cited ASPIRA as a major factor in their decision to go to college and, of these, 25% said that ASPIRA was the most important factor. Even Club members who never met with an ASPIRA counselor "still reported ASPIRA as a positive influence on career goals, ethnicity and personal identity. The total setting which ASPIRA provides, not just counseling, appears to be important (p. 27)."

What the 1982 evaluation study called "the total setting which ASPIRA provides" refers to more than physical facilities. In many cases, our Counselors share office space with regular school counselors (office space is often an in-kind contribution provided by schools). Most club meetings are conducted in regular classrooms after school hours. Counselors approach students in the school hallways, or cafeterias for important reminders.

What the ASPIRA staff does provide, irrespective of location, is a sense of belonging which helps the students feel more comfortable and purposeful in school. Accurate, updated guidance on a variety of subjects of interest to students (ranging from AIDS to teenage pregnancy) is also available from the ASPIRA staff.

Moreover, the staff's high expectations constitute a challenge. In the words of a former Aspirante:

ASPIRA...was the first Newark organization that recognized the role of Puerto Rican youth in the community, encouraging us to aim for the highest college placement, to do the very best. It truly became the backbone of support of our high school life. ASPIRA really pushed. Even when we were not ready, it pushed... It was a challenge that could not be refused.

The quote is a reflection upon the ASPIRA experience, provided in writing to ASPIRA in December 1989 by Carmelo Colon, an Alumnus. Mr. Colon grew up in Newark's Columbus Home Projects, graduated from high school in 1971 and is now a Mental Health Clinician at the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey. His story, and his views about ASPIRA, are representative of those of the majority of the students which ASPIRA serves.

During calendar year 1992 ASPIRA will be conducting a new, 10- year evaluation of it's effectiveness, with the assistance of Educational Testing Service. Findings will not only be internally discussed, but also provided to the agency's friends and donor. The National Westminster Bank of New Jersey will receive further information when this research is completed.

Appendix B

ASPIRA, Inc. of New Jersey Mid-year Program's Report (1991-1992)

The year of 1991-1992 began with important additions to the program staff. ASPIRA was funded by the United States Department of Education to implement a Talent Search Program in Camden. Thus, a search to fill five new counseling staff positions and one Program Director ensued. A committee composed of the two Leadership Coordinators and the two Programs Directors was established to screen and interview applicants. Interviews were held with candidates through October and the beginning of November. By mid November the Talent Search counseling positions were all staffed. After two searches for a Program Director, Ms. Wanda De Jesus was appointed to that position.

This year has also seen a significant change to the organizational structure of the agency: the formation of the ASPIRA Student Advisory Board (ASAB). This board is integrated by eight elected students that represent all the Aspirantes in New Jersey. The ASAB advises the Board of Directors on student issues. Two ASAB members are ex-officio board members. Every ASAB member reports to a County Student Advisory Board, which is composed of the ASAB member(s) and the president(s) and vice-president(s) of the ASPIRA Club(s) within the county.

Agency Caseload Overview

Through the recruitment efforts initiated by staff a total of 1,148 students are listed on the active caseload. Of this number 411 or 35.80% were males and 737 or 64.25% were females. In terms of ethnicity, 801 or 69.77% were Puerto Rican, 108 or 9.41% were Dominican, 22 or 1.92% were Cuban, 75 or 6.53% were Central or South American, 62 or 5.40% were African American, and 80 or 6.97% were listed as Other.

An additional 612 students who are not on the active caseload have received services from ASPIRA. Thus, a total of 1,760 students have benefited from ASPIRA services.

Program Highlights

1. ASPIRA Student Advisory Board

Clearly the highlight during the first three months has been the creation of the ASPIRA Student Advisory Board. During the month of October, nominees for the ASAB were chosen by every ASPIRA Club in the state of New Jersey. Nominees campaigned, made coalitions with other candidates, and requested the votes of their peers for a one to two period. By October 11th, ASAB

elections were held throughout the state. On November 9th, the ASAB held their first meeting. At the meeting the members drafted a list of concerns that affect them as students. This list of concerns was then presented to the ASPIRA Board of Directors.

2. Puerto Rican Day Parades (Newark and Trenton)
Newark-July 29, 1991 - Trenton-August 4, 1991

Students, Parents, Staff, and Board members joined the ASPIRA contingent that danced and celebrated Puerto Rican culture. Once again students performed various dances from Puerto Rico. Willie Sanchez was the chief choreographer to the dance routines performed by the students. Again, ASPIRA was the class act, as we received a front page cover on the Newark Star Ledger.

3. Leadership Development Retreat - October 18-20, 1992
Princeton Education Center at Blairstown

The annual Leadership Development Retreat was once again held at the Princeton Education Center at Blairstown. A total of 36 students attended. This year's retreat was attended by more students than in the previous years. Students worked in groups to solve problems and develop decision-making skills. A key component of the retreat were the County meetings held Saturday night. At the county meetings students had an opportunity to voice their opinion as to the significant problems affecting Latinos in their community. This meeting set the ground work for the ASAB.

4. Annual Careers Day Conference - November 18, 1991
Rutgers Camden

Approximately 110 students from the Camden and Trenton Centers attended the Annual Careers Day Conference at Rutgers Camden. The students were treated to various career and college-oriented workshops. The keynote speech was given by Dr. Janice Petrovich of the ASPIRA Association.

5. 15th Annual Careers Day Conference-December 4, 1991
William Paterson College

William Paterson College hosted the annual event for the third consecutive year. Students attended career workshops in Engineering, Health Careers, Psychology, and Computer Science. The younger students attended a Career Decision-Making workshop. After the morning session, the students were all given a tour of the William Paterson College campus. Afterwards they had the opportunity to speak to over 25 college representatives at the College Fair. Students evaluated the conference highly, stating that it is a necessary activity to make key decisions about which career to choose and which college to attend. Believe it or not, they also liked the lunch.

6. InfoTech II
New Jersey Institute of Technology - December 10, 1991

InfoTech was a Math and Science conference at NJIT. ASPIRA was not directly responsible for the planning of the activity, but did receive billing as a co-sponsor. Students were exposed to the latest math and science technology during the workshops. The highlight of the conference was the keynote speaker, Dr. Ellen Ochoa, the first Latina astronaut.

Staff Training

Staff participated in an intensive two week training program before they returned to the schools. The first week of training was held in August and the second week in September. Workshops were designed based on counselors' needs. A number of staff have indicated that this year's staff training was the best in preparing them for their responsibilities.

County Caseload Totals

A. Essex County

The Essex County Center has thus far recruited a total of 413 students. Of this number 150 or 36.32% were male and 263 or 63.68% were female. In terms of ethnicity 287 or 69.49% were Puerto Rican, 34 or 8.23% were Dominican, 18 or 4.36% were Cuban, 28 or 6.78% were either listed as Central or South American, 17 or 4.12% were African American, and 29 or 7.02% were listed under Other.

An additional 415 students who are not on the active caseload also received services from ASPIRA. Thus, a total of 828 students have benefited from ASPIRA services.

In terms of programs the students from Essex County have participated in 54 club meetings, 23 workshops, 2 Conferences, 2 College Fairs, 5 field trips, 1 retreat, 17 Dance Troupe Presentations, 1 College Presentation, 1 Parent's Open House and 2 community service activities (one-a halloween activity with Day Care Students, one-a Toy for Tots for children in a local shelter. Workshops were held in the following topics:

Cultural Awareness(Dance), Depression/Suicide, Community Resources, Teenage Pregnancy, S.A.T. Preparation, Medical Careers, Team Building, Aids Awareness, Samuel Betances-Making the World Safe For Differences, Hispanic in the Media, Self-esteem, ASPIRA Student Advisory Board, Parent/Student Relations, Motivation, Bilingual Technical Schools and Issues Affecting Students.

B. Passaic County

The Passaic County Center has thus far recruited a total of 130 students. Of this number 36 or 27.69% were male and 94 or 72.31% were female. In terms of ethnicity 63 or 48.46% were Puerto Rican, 40 or 30.77% were Dominican, 14 or 10.77% were either Cuban, Central or South American, and 6 or 4.62% were listed under Other. An additional 129 students who are not on the active caseload also received services from ASPIRA. Thus, a total of 259 students have benefited from ASPIRA services.

In terms of programs the students from Passaic County have participated in 114 club meetings, 5 workshops, 1 retreat, 1 field trip and 1 community service activity during Christmas for Children with Aids at St. Joseph's Hospital.

Workshops were held in the following topics:

ASPIRA Process, HIV and other Sexually Transmitted Disease, S.A.T. Preparation.

C. Hudson County

The Hudson County Center has thus far recruited a total of 83 students. Of this number 26 or 31.33% were male and 57 or 68.67% were female. In terms of ethnicity 40 or 48.13% were Puerto Rican, 18 or 21.69% were Dominican, 13 or 15.66% were either Cuban, Central or South American, and 11 or 13.25% were listed under Other.

An additional 24 students who are not on the active caseload also received services from ASPIRA. Thus, a total of 107 students have benefited from ASPIRA services.

In terms of programs the students from Hudson County have participated in 9 club meetings, 1 club fundraiser, 6 workshops, 1 retreat and 3 conferences.

Workshops were held in the following topics:

S.A.T. Preparation, College Expectations, Working in Groups, Time Management, Teenage Sexual Behavior/Pregnancy Prevention, and St. Peter's College Tutoring Program.

D. Mercer County

The Mercer County Center has thus far recruited a total of 142 students. Of this number 64 or 45.07% were male and 78 or 54.93% were female. In terms of ethnicity 102 or 71.83% were Puerto Rican, 2 or 1.42% were Central American, 24 or 16.90% were African American, and 13 or 9.15% were listed as Other. An

additional 44 students who are not on the active caseload also received services from ASPIRA. Thus, a total of 178 students have benefited from ASPIRA services.

In terms of programs the students from Mercer County have participated in 17 club meetings, 3 Field Trips, 1 Careers Conference, 1 Retreat and 1 ASPIRA Presentation.

E. Camden County

The Camden County Center has thus far recruited a total of 380 students. Of this number 135 or 35.53% were male and 245 or 64.47% were female. In terms of ethnicity 309 or 81.32% were Puerto Rican, 15 or 3.95% were Dominican, 2 or .53% were Cuban, 12 or 3.16% were either listed as Central or South American, 21 or 5.53% were African American, and 21 or 5.53% were listed under Other.

In terms of programs the students from Camden County have participated in 21 club meetings, 2 workshops, 2 Field Trips, 1 walking tour of Philadelphia, 1 Parents Meeting, and 1 Careers Day Conference.

Workshops were held in the following topics:

Artistic Expression, and Drug and Alcohol Abuse.

General Program Concerns

A. Quincentennial Celebration:

The ASPIRA Dance Troupe has performed on 17 occasions celebrating the cultural roots of Puerto Rico. The students from Barringer Prep. held a one day assembly to celebrate the cultural awareness of Puerto Rico. Students from Barringer Prep. participated in Dance workshops before the assembly to prepare them to perform before the student body. Students from Barringer High School have planned a Three Kings Day Activity for the children that attend La Casa's Day Care Center. Students from Camden are preparing a skit that will illustrate the discovery of Puerto Rico. Profiles on Puerto Rican heroes will be researched and presented by students at club meetings. Staff have been contacting historians to come to their club meetings and present the historical significance of the quincentennial. The Annual Cultural Awareness Conference will be held at Rider College. This year's conference will take a historical perspective of Puerto Rico and of its heritage.

B. Male Caseload

The caseload data at ASPIRA for the last couple of years has

witnessed a trend of fewer males benefiting from the program. Consequently, Puerto Rican and other Latino males continue to dropout at staggering rates and a small percentage attend post-secondary educational institutions. This year the ASPIRA Counseling staff has made a conscious effort to recruit more males for the caseload. Every counselor has implemented a male recruitment goal. These goals represent a 5% increase from last year's totals. Task Force recruitment teams will be established to identify Latinos for the caseload. Workshops on Sexuality and Pregnancy will be conducted by Planned Parenthood. An all male leadership retreat will be scheduled for late spring. Lastly, anticipated funding is expected from the State of New Jersey to support a Minority Male project.

Schedule of Activities: January, 1992 - June, 1992

Cultural Awareness Conference, "Colon Se Perdio...Nuestra Historia", Rider College, February 21, 1992

Math and Science Hands On Workshops, NJIT, March, 1992

Health and Science Careers Conference, UMDNJ, March, 1992

Field Trip, Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, La Carreta, March, 1992

Statewide Youth Conference, Rutgers College, April 30, 1992

Awards Night Ceremony, Princeton University, June, 1992